

Greater Twin Cities United Way hereby submits its Reply Comments to Public Notice DA 07-2017, released May 7, 2007. The Public Notice requested comments on the status of implementation of the 211 and 511 Dialing Codes. Further, the Public Notice requested comments on actions the Commission should take if these Dialing Codes are not widely used. Greater Twin Cities United Way is limiting its comments to the status of 2-1-1 services in Minnesota.

Greater Twin Cities United Way has been the managing partner and lead call center in the deployment of Minnesota 2-1-1. Minnesota 2-1-1 consists of five regional call centers, employs 40 people, and since July 2, 2001 has provided 2-1-1 service to all 87 counties in the state of Minnesota reaching a population of 4,919,479. The statewide database of service providers used for making referrals has listings for more than 13,000 agencies and over 40,000 services/programs and in 2006, our call centers received more than 480,000 calls. The most common reasons that people call Minnesota 2-1-1 relates to basic needs: housing, food and shelter followed closely by utility assistance and transportation. Health care service related calls including information on prenatal care have risen significantly in the past 12-24 months. We have also been able to assist callers who request information for donation programs and services, volunteer opportunities and holiday programs. Minnesota 2-1-1 has also allowed us to collect specific information on unmet needs in our community. This information is valuable not only to the 2-1-1 statewide system but to organizations such as United Way in our planning for community impact.

Greater Twin Cities United Way 2-1-1 has worked closely with the four regional Minnesota 2-1-1 call centers and various community partners, including the City of Minneapolis Health and Family Support division and their Community Preparedness Specialist, Minnesota VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. These and many other community partners have devoted significant time and resources to implement and operate the Minnesota 2-1-1 service to ease access for people in need of information about health and human services. We respectfully request that the Commission find the public is well-served by the use of 2-1-1, that the Commission continue to support the 2-1-1 Dialing Code for this purpose, and that the Commission use its' authority to facilitate more widespread use of the service.

Sincerely, Lauren Segal, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Twin Cities United Way